Numb. LVII.

The GUARDIAN.

Quam multa injusta ac prava fiunt moribus! Ter.

Saturday, May 16. 1713.

IT is of no small Concern to me that the Interests of Virtue are supplanted by common Custom, and Regard for indifferent things. Thus Mode and Fashion defend the most absurd and unjust Proceedings, and no Body is out of Countenance for doing what every Body practises, though at the same time there is no one who is not convinced in his own Judgment of the Errors in which he goes on with the Multitude. My Correspondent, who writes me the following Letter, has put together a great many Points which would deserve serious Consideration, as much as things which at first Appearance bear a weightier Aspect. He recites almost all the little Arts that are used in the Way to Matrimony, by the Parents of young Women. There is nothing more common than for People, who have good and worthy Characters, to run, without Respect to the Laws of Gratitude, into the most exorbitant Demands for their Children, upon no other Foundation than that which should incline them to the quite contrary, the unreserved Affection of the Lover. I shall at this time, by inserting my Correspondent's Letter, lay such Offences before all Parents and Daughters respectively, and reserve the particular Instances to be considered in future Precautions.

To NESTOR IRONSIDE, *Esq;*

SIR,

'I Have for some time retired my self from the 'Town and Business to a little Seat, where a 'pleasant Champian Country, good Roads and 'healthful Air tempt me often Abroad, and being a 'single Man, have contracted more Acquaintance 'than is suitable to my Years, or agreeable to the 'Intentions of Retirement I brought down with 'me hither. Among others, I have a young Neighbour, who, yesterday, imparted to me the History 'of an honourable Amour, which has been carried 'on a considerable time with a great deal of Love 'on his side, and (as he says he has been made to 'believe) with something very unlike Aversion 'on the young Lady's. But so Matters have been 'contriv'd, that he could never get to know her 'Mind throughly: When he was first acquainted 'with her, he might be as intimate with her as o'ther People; but since he first declared his Passion, 'he has never been admitted to wait upon her, or 'to see her, other than in Publick. If he went to 'her Father's House, and desired to visit her, she 'was either to be Sick, or out of the way, and no 'body would come near him in two Hours, and 'then he should be received as if he had committed 'some strange Offence. If he asked her Father's 'leave to visit her, the old Gentleman was mute. 'If he put it Negatively, and asked if he refused it, 'the Father would answer with a Smile, *No, I 'don't say so neither.* If they talked of the Fortune, 'he had considered his Circumstances, and it every 'Day diminished. If the Settlements came into 'Debate, he had considered the young Gentleman's 'Estate, and daily encreased his Expectations. If 'the Mother was consulted, she was mightily for 'the Match, but affected strangely to shew her Cun'ning in perplexing Matters. It went off seemingly 'several times, but my young Neighbour's Passion 'was such that it easily revived upon the least En'couragement given him; but tired out with Wri'ting (the only Liberty allowed him) and receiving 'Answers at Cross Purposes, destitute of all Hopes, 'he at length wrote a formal Adieu; but it was very 'unfortunately timed, for soon after he had the long 'wished-for Opportunity of finding her at a di'stance from her Parents. Struck with the joyful 'News, in heat of Passion, resolute to do any 'thing rather than leave her, down he comes Post, 'directly to the House where she was, without any 'preparatory Intercession after the Provocation of 'an Adieu. She, in a premeditated Anger to shew 'her Resentment, refused to see him. He, in a 'kind of fond Frenzy, absent from himself, and 'exasperated into Rage, cuffed her heartily; 'but returning to himself, was all Confusion, Re'pentance and Submission, but in vain; the Lady 'continued inexorable, and so the Affair ended in a 'manner

(Price Two Pence.)